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JACOB BOEHME

Jacob Boehme was born in 1575, at Alt Seidenburg, near Goerlitz, in Germany. His parents who were prosperous peasants gave him an education of the simplest kind at the village school. As a boy he looked after the cattle on the hillside fields.

At the age of fourteen he was apprenticed to a shoemaker, and after diligently applying himself to this trade for ten years he became a master shoemaker. About this time he married Katherine Kuntzschmann, the daughter of a rich merchant, with whom he lived happily for twenty-five years, until his death. They had a family of four sons and two daughters. This is the simple background of his life.

Jacob Boehme, one of the greatest of the German mystics, possessed an innate gift for the transcendental. Yet, writing at a time when theological controversy was very active and often characterized by narrowness of thought and intense bitterness, his unorthodox teachings were the occasion of much opposition and persecution.

The sweep of Boehme's thought and the depth of his vision are wide in extent and original in character, enriching the tradition of idealistic speculation and religious experience and making a definite and lasting impression upon the mystical thought of Europe.

The sphere of his influence is restricted, however, by his use of unusual symbolic terminology, which is of an extremely involved, allegorical and enigmatical nature, rendering many of his writings so obscure as to be almost unintelligible to the majority of students.

While throwing a flood of light upon the profoundest truths, and thus illuminating the ladder which leads from earth to

heaven and enabling the soul to gain a vision of its glorious goal, yet through a misunderstanding of their true significance, Boehme's teachings have sometimes led to quietism on the one hand, and to materialistic occultism and phenomenalism on the other. Boehme himself, however, avoided both of these extremes and throughout his life preserved that simple and childlike faith in the Divine which is the essential requisite for true mysticism.

Three times, Jacob Boehme tells us, he had what, for the lack of a better name, may be termed a Mystical Experience: once as a boy on the hillside while attending the cattle; again in 1600, shortly after his marriage, when he says that the mysteries of nature were revealed to him; and more especially in 1610, which experience he describes in the *Aurora*:

"While I was in affliction and trouble, I elevated my soul, and earnestly raised it to God, as with a great stress and onset, lifting up my whole heart and mind and will and resolution to wrestle with the love and mercy of God and not to give over unless He blessed me—then the Spirit did break through. When in my resolved zeal I made such an assault, storm and onset upon God, as if I had more reserve of virtue and power ready, with a resolution to hazard my life upon it, suddenly my soul did break through the Gate, not without the assistance of the Holy Spirit, and I reached to the innermost Birth of the Deity and there I was embraced with love as a bridegroom embraces his bride. My triumphing can be compared to nothing but the experience in which life is generated in the midst of death, or like the resurrection from the dead. In this Light my soul suddenly saw through all, and in all created things, even in herbs and grass, I knew God—who He is, how He is, and what His will is—and suddenly in that Light my will was set upon by a mighty impulse to describe the being of God." (*Aurora*, XIX, 10-13.)

Jacob Boehme did not begin to write until he was thirty-seven years of age. The *Aurora*, or Morning Glow, was his first work, and it was written with great intensity, as the spirit moved him. It was not intended for publication, but one of his friends, a nobleman named Karl von Endern, borrowed the manuscript and caused copies of it to be made.

One of these copies fell into the hands of Gregorius Richter, pastor primarius of Gorlitz, an ignorant and narrow-minded

defender of orthodoxy. Richter could not understand the book, and, as is often the case with the small-minded in such circumstances, he was enraged, and he preached violently against the work and its author, with an animosity which lasted all his life.

The town council was called upon to banish this so-called heretic from their midst. They yielded to the demand, but after reconsidering their decision, they recalled him on condition that he wrote no more for seven years. With this decree the gentle mystic faithfully complied, but copies of the *Aurora* remained in circulation, and led many men of kindred interests and nobility of outlook to seek the company and counsel of the author.

During the seven years* in which he refrained from writing, Jacob Boehme was not idle. He made himself acquainted with the writings of Paracelsus and the spiritual Alchemists, and much of their terminology is to be found in his later writings.

In 1619, at the expiration of his enforced literary idleness, he wrote *The Three Principles*, and from then until the end of his life he poured out a continuous stream of abstruse writings.

In 1620 he wrote *The Threefold Life*, *The Forty Questions*, and *The Six Points*, in 1622 *Signatura Rerum*, *The Way to Christ*, and *The Supersensual Life*, in 1623 *Mysterium Magnum*, and in 1624 *The Holy Week* and *The Clavis*, together with a number of minor works.

On the publication of *The Way to Christ*, the only work of Jacob Boehme's to be actually printed during his lifetime, Richter burst forth into another torrent of abuse, which resulted in a second expulsion of the mystic from his native town. But by this time Jacob Boehme had influential friends, especially Dr. Balthazar Walter, director of the chemical laboratory of Dresden, Dr. Tobias Kober, a physician of Goerlitz, who was a disciple of Paracelsus, and Abraham von Franckenberg, and he made his way to Dresden to the court of the Elector of Saxony, where he was invited "to a conference of high people."

At the request of the Elector, Professors of Theology and other learned men examined Jacob Boehme, but although they carried out the examination with great thoroughness and

* Some accounts of his life suggest that he only complied with the edict for five years and that at the end of this time he began writing again, but not for publication.

kindliness, they confessed in the end that many of his doctrines were altogether beyond their comprehension, and they did not feel justified in condemning that which they did not themselves understand: a very different attitude from that of Richter.

Jacob Boehme passed from this life on Sunday, November 17, 1624, at the age of fifty.

The night before his passing he asked his family if they could hear the lovely music, and requested that the door be opened so that he could hear it more clearly; but it was heavenly music which he heard. As the dawn broke a smile lit up his face, and he said: "Now I go to Paradise."

All of Jacob Boehme's writings were translated into English by John Sparrow and his kinsman John Ellistone, between 1647 and 1661, and the influence of his spiritual outlook impressed itself upon such writers as John Pordage (1608-1698), the author of *Theologia Mystica*, Jane Leade (1623-1704), who wrote a number of Christian allegories, and together with Pordage founded the mystical sect of the Philadelphians; and also Thomas Bromley, the author of *The Way of the Sabbath of Rest, or the Soul's Progress in the Work of the New Birth*.

It is of interest to note the wide diversity of the minds that were attracted by the writings of Jacob Boehme. Charles I (1600-1649) is said to have read and greatly appreciated the *Forty Questions* shortly before his death; and Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist (1614-1687), undoubtedly came under his influence.

There is an interesting theory that Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727) derived the principles of his discovery of the laws of gravitation from the three great principles or first laws of nature outlined by Boehme.

William Law (1686-1761), who may be called a disciple of Boehme and whose later writings are largely based on the works of the German mystic, in a letter to a friend, Dr. Cheyne, wrote as follows: "When Sir Isaac Newton died, there were found amongst his papers abstracts out of Jacob Boehme's works written in his own hand. This I have from undoubted authority; as also that in the former part of his life, he was led into a search of the philosopher's tincture, from the same author. It is evidently plain that all that Sir Isaac said of the universality of nature, was not only said, but proved in its true and deepest ground by

J. B., in his three first Properties of Eternal Nature; and from thence they are derived into this temporal outbirth."

And in a postscript to the same letter: "It is no wonder that attraction, with its two inseparable properties which make in J. B. the first Three Properties of Eternal Nature, should come to be the grand foundation of the Newtonian Philosophy."

Another mystic who was greatly influenced by Jacob Boehme was the French writer Louis Claude de Saint Martin (1743-1803), who said of him: "He is intended only for men who have been regenerated wholly, or at least for those who have a great desire to be so."

Lastly must be mentioned Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843), the founder of Homeopathy, who is said to have derived the principles of his system of healing from Boehme's *Signatura Rerum*.

Jacob Boehme is not an easy author to understand. He writes of deep mysteries in the language of spiritual alchemy which always veils its meaning, Yet he will repay careful study, for he is stimulating, and never loses the freshness of his appeal to that which is highest and noblest in man.

Since Boehme's terminology and symbology are almost exclusively confined to his own writings and often differ from those used by other mystics, few students will find it profitable to try fully to unravel their intricacies. The primary value of the teachings is in the representation of his inner vision, and if the reader seeks to perceive their spiritual meaning and to be touched by the Divine Light and Fire by which Boehme was inspired, he will be penetrating to the essence which underlies them. The appeal to the spiritual intuition is Boehme's chief intention.

In order to make more easily intelligible the example of Boehme's writings which follows, definitions of a few of the unusual terms which he uses are here given.

Magia.—This is the Spirit of the Will, either in the Creator or the Creature.

The Divine *Magia* is the Divine Will which is the Ground and Cause of that which is Eternal, the first manifestation of Unity, without which It would be hidden and unknown.

The Creaturely *Magia* (or Will Spirit) operates in inanimate things as attraction, in animals instinctually, but in man it is much higher, having its never-beginning in Eternity.

It is the genuine offspring of the Will Spirit of God, and therefore (in its degree) partakes of the power of God over Nature.

Tincture.—The Spiritual Divine or Heavenly *Tincture* is termed Vital Virtue or Life, the effluent motion of which is the pure Element or Paradisical Potentiality.

Considered with respect to the visible world, it is that which gives to all things their different kinds and degrees of beauty, excellence and agreeable properties, their growth, splendour, and perfection.

Fiat.—(Let it be done.) The Eternal Word. The Creative or Efficient Power of God. It also has its place in the creative activities of the Creature, where it manifests as the power, operation, and effect of his activities.

Turba.—A corruption in the soul's activities. A fierce wrath-fire.

OF THE SOUL AND THE IMAGE OF THE SOUL

BY JACOB BOEHME

(Translated by John Sparrow, in 1647)

1. The soul is an eye in the Eternal Abyss, a similitude of eternity, a perfect figure and image of the First Principle, and resembleth God the Father in His Person, as to the Eternal Nature.

2. The essence and substance of it, merely and purely as it is in itself, is first the wheel of nature, as to the first four forms.*

3. For the Word of the Lord comprised the soul, by the eternal *Fiat* in the Eternal Will of the Father, in the Centre of the Eternal Nature, and opened it with the Holy Ghost, or blew it up as a fire, which lay hid in the eternity, and wherein all forms of the eternal nature stood from eternity, and is alone known in the wisdom, in the Divine *Magia* as a figure or Image without substance.

4. Yet that thing hath not been substantial, but essential, and hath been known in the Principle, in the flash, where the fire

* 1. Astringent. 2. Bitter. 3. Fire. 4. Anguish.

ariseth; but the shadow of it hath, from eternity in a figurative image, figured itself in the desiring Will of God, and hath stood before the Ternary of God in the *Magia*, in the Wisdom of God, as a similitude of the Holy Trinity, in which God hath manifested Himself as in a glass.

5. The substance and image of the soul may be resembled to the earth, having a fair flower growing out of it, and also to the fire and light: as we see that earth is a centre but no life; yet it is essential: and a fair flower groweth out of it, which is not like earth, neither hath it the smell and taste of the earth, much less the figure of it, and yet the earth is the mother of the flower.

6. And so the soul also shone out of the Eternal Centre of nature, out of the Eternal Essence, with the word *Fiat* in the Will of God; and was held in the *Fiat*, so that it shone as a fiery eye, and similitude of the First Principle, in a creaturely form and substance.

7. And from this eye went the glance of its fire, as light doth from fire; and in this glance of its own fire, the Eternal Image, which is in the Wisdom of God, was seen and conceived by the Will of the Heart of God in the Second Principle; that is, by the Word *Fiat* of the Second Principle, in the Love and Power of the Holy Trinity, whence the Holy Ghost proceedeth.

8. And thus the soul was a whole similitude and image of the Holy Trinity: here we must take the soul for the centre of nature, and its fiery life for the First Principle; but the sprout, or the image of the soul, which is the similitude of God, buddeth forth from the soul, as a flower from the earth, and is comprised by the Holy Ghost; for it is His mansion.

9. Now if the soul putteth its imagination out from itself (we mean out from its source or property of fire) into the Light of God, then it receiveth the Light, as the moon doth the glance of the sun; and so its image standeth in the Majesty of God, and the soul in the Light of God, and its fiery property is changed into meekness and fervent love; and then it is known to be the child of God.

10. But seeing the soul is essential, and its own substance a desire, it is plain that it consisteth of two *Fiats*, one of them is its corporeal property, and the other is the Second Principle, proceeding from God's Will which is in the soul, in which God desireth to have the soul His image and similitude.

11. To which end God's desiring is as a *Fiat* in the centre of the soul, and continually draweth the will of the soul towards the Heart of God: for the Will of God would have the soul; and, on the contrary, the centre in the power of the fire would have it.

12. For the life of the soul hath its original in the fire, and that makes the striving for the image of the soul: and which of these two forms, whether it be the fire, or meekness of love that overcometh, that will be the quality of the soul; and as the quality of the will of the soul is, such an image will the soul have.

13. And we must know that if the will of the soul changeth itself, then its form will also be changed; for if the quality of the soul be fiery, then it hath also a fiery image.

14. But if the soul turneth its imagination into the centre, into the strong astringency and bitterness, then its fair image is also captivated in the dark astringency, and infected with the astringent wrath.

15. And then this wrath is a *turba*, which possesseth the image, and destroyeth the similitude of God; for in God there is love, light, and meekness: but in this image there is darkness, astringency, and bitterness, and the essential quality of fire, proceeding from the essence of wrath; and then this image belongeth not to the kingdom of God, so long as it continueth in this quality and form of darkness.

16. Further, fire is a similitude of the soul; the soul is an essential fire, and the flash of the fire is the life of it: the soul resembleth a globe or an eye of fire.

17. The burning fire in the source signifieth the First Principle and the life, yet the fire is not the life; but the spirit of the source which ariseth from the fire, and proceedeth from the fire-like air, that is the true spirit of the source of the life of the fire, which continually bloweth the fire up again, and maketh it burn.

18. Now the fire shineth, and giveth light out of the source, and dwelleth in the source where it shineth, and the source comprehendeth not the light; and this signifieth the Second Principle, wherein God dwelleth.

19. For we know that the virtue is in the light, and not in the fire; the fire only giveth essence to the light, and the life, or the light, produceth meekness and substantiality, namely water.

20. Now we understand that there is a loving life in the light, without source, and yet itself is an imperceptible source; it is nothing but a longing or desire of love.

21. Which Source we account a Tincture, in which the budding and blossoming hath its original, yet the fire is the cause of it, and the meekness is a cause of the substantiality; for the desire of love in the light attracteth it, and keepeth it, so that it becometh a substance; but the desire of fire consumeth the substantiality.

22. Also we must conceive that, as the soul is purely and alone in the centre, it is an essential fire in the eye of eternity; and yet that eye desireth a figure and image of the Wisdom of God.

23. And the image is in its desire, in its imagination; for the Word *Fiat* hath comprehended it, that it might be a similitude of the eternal Wisdom of God, wherein He dwelleth, and wherein He may manifest Himself by His spirit, and whatever hath been in His eternal counsel.

24. Thus the Majesty of God flameth in the image, in the essential fire, if the essential fire putteth its desire into the Majesty; but if not, then the image is void and naked without God, and the tincture is false.

25. For the image standeth in the tincture, and hath its original in the tincture, in the light, not in the source of the fire: and as the Heart or Word of God hath its original in the light of the Majesty, in the Eternal Tincture of the fire of the Father, so hath the image of the soul.

26. The image dwelleth in the fire of the soul, as light dwelleth in the fire; but it hath another Principle, as the light is such a source as is different from fire.

27. And so the true image of God dwelleth in the light of the fire of the soul; which light the fiery soul must create in the fountain of the Love of God, in the Majesty, by putting and yielding its imagination into it.

28. And if the soul do not so, but putteth its imagination into itself, into its wrathful form of the source of the fire, and not into the fountain of love, into the Light of God, then its own source of sharpness, astringency, and bitterness riseth up; and the image of God becometh a *turba*, and swalloweth up the image of God in the wrath.

29. And then the astringent *Fiat*, in the fiery essence of the soul, figureth for the soul an image of the imagination that is

in its will: whatsoever the essential fire of the soul desireth, that will be figured in the soul, namely earthly figures: that which the will of the heart casteth itself into, that image the *Fiat* of the soul will make; that is as far as the Third Principle and the spirit of the stars and elements have power.

30. So that if the will of the soul casteth itself into the kingdom of this world, then the outward kingdom hath power to bring its imagination into the inward Principle; and if the inward *Fiat* perceiveth that in the fire of the soul, then it becometh pregnant with it, and retaineth it.

31. And then the soul hath the image of a beast in the Third Principle, and that cannot be destroyed for ever, except the will of the soul returneth again out of the earthly lust, and pierceth into the love of God again, and then it getteth the image of God again, which may be done only in this life, while the soul is essentially in its aether, in the growing of its tree; but after this life it cannot be done.

32. Thus you may understand what the soul, spirit, image, and *turba* are. The soul dwelleth in itself, and is an essential fire; and its image standeth in itself, in the imagination in the light of the soul if it cleave to God; if not, then it is in anxiety in the wrath of darkness, and is an abominable image.

33. The *turba* of the soul, which destroyeth the divine image, is the wrathfulness; and it is caused by the imagination, or false love and imaging, and therefore all lieth in the imagination: the image consisteth in that which we permit to come into our desire.

34. It is very necessary for us to strive continually against the earthly reason of flesh and blood, and to yield the spirit of our wills into the mercy and love of God, and always cast ourselves into the Will of God, and not account earthly profit and pleasure our treasure, setting our desire therein, which will destroy the image; for it is a *turba* of the image of God, and bringeth earthly properties into the image.

35. To sum up all: Christ said, *Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*, according to which God will judge the secrets of mankind, and sever the clean from the unclean; and give that which is false to the *turba* of the fire to be devoured; and that which is holy, which is entered into God, He will introduce into His kingdom. Amen.

THE LAWS OF MANU

WITH A COMMENTARY BY THE EDITORS OF THE
SHRINE OF WISDOM

1. *The Creation**

51. "He Whose Power is incomprehensible, having thus produced the universe and me, withdrew into Himself, exchanging a period of creation for a period of repose.

52. "When that Divine One awakes, then this world is active; when He slumbers tranquilly, then the universe sinks into sleep.

53. "For when He reposes, as it were, in calm sleep, those active beings with corporeal bodies cease from their several actions, and mind becomes inoperative.

54. "When they, in due course, return to that great Soul, then He Who is the Universal Soul, withdraws His energy and peacefully sleeps.

55. "Then the vital soul, with the organs of sense and action, long remains in its first form and performs not its natural functions, but leaves the corporeal frame.

56. "When, being clothed with the elements, it enters into the seeds of vegetable and animal life it assumes a new form.

57. "Thus, He, the Imperishable One, by waking and sleeping, perpetually vivifies and destroys this whole assemblage of movable and immovable creatures."

The withdrawal of Brahma from creation; the sleeping and waking states into which He is described as passing, and the consequent results represented as happening to the cosmos and its existences, cannot be correctly interpreted in a literal sense: these statements require to be accepted as analogical and mystical truths.

Such modes of presenting the Divine Attributes are necessary in order that they may be conceivable to the finite mind: but since the terms used imply time and space they cannot be correctly predicated of Brahma Who is Himself the Producer of time and space.

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 69, 70, and 71.

Brahma may be considered in relation to Himself and in relation to His creation—in His Unmanifest and Manifest aspects. In the primary aspect He abides immutably in Himself: in the secondary aspect He is twofold—active, creative, or proceeding, and convertive, and returning, or perfective.

The first symbolically represents Him as sleeping; the second as waking and the third as withdrawing from external activity.

When any of these three aspects is regarded alone and the others are excluded, partitive and erroneous conceptions inevitably arise: hence the need for taking all of them into consideration and of giving each its right place and relationship.

The description of creation being completed, another relationship of Brahma to the cosmos is introduced in which He is portrayed as withdrawing from it into Himself and resting. This corresponds almost exactly with the passages in Genesis, where it is recorded that after the six days of creation, "God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good," "And He rested on the seventh day."

Plato expresses a similar idea in the *Politicus*: "Then the Governor of the universe, laying aside the handle of the rudder, departed to that place of survey whence He contemplates Himself."

The Creator should not be regarded, however, as literally withdrawing from the world, for Brahma is immanent as well as transcendent and therefore always abides within the world as its sustaining power.

Creation is not a meaningless activity, but it implies a purpose. The fulfilment of this purpose is realized through the exercise and actualization by all created things of the inherent powers with which they have been endowed. More especially is this so in respect to man, who, although he does not essentially belong to the cosmos, yet has to work out within it his own salvation.

The universe is a perfect work of a perfect creator. It is a complete manifested whole in which all the essential principles, secondary wholenesses and integral parts are harmoniously related together. Brahma not only creates, but He also preserves and provides for all His creatures. Thus He imparts to each an essential nature of its own; institutes laws to govern the all-various individual and collective activities, and places over

the cosmos Ruling Intelligences to administer the laws and to guide both the irrational creatures of nature and rational human beings in the fulfilment of their several purposes.

This "withdrawal" is also termed destruction; Brahma is said to absorb the world into Himself. Teachings of a similar kind are found in many other scriptures and mythologies. They always imply some aspect of the returning process whereby the potentialities of all things become actualized and perfected.

Kapila, the founder of the Sankhya philosophy, says that destruction is the return to the producing cause and that all external things were formed that the soul might know itself to be free.

Everything receives its perfection through union with its cause: the principle from which each thing derives its being or existence is therefore also its goal. Different things have different places in the hierarchical scale and hence have definite functions to perform in the cosmic scheme. Thus the perfection of natural things is realized in the cosmos, but that of man, because his true place is above nature, is only found when he transcends nature and enters the celestial realms as a result of his union with Brahma.

All corporeal existences are generated and therefore all must decay: yet nothing is actually destroyed, for in the processes of decay it is merely the material substance that is resolved into another form; the essential types which were the cause of the specific existences being preserved in nature.

Generated things cannot abide immutably in one condition, therefore, as soon as they reach fullness, the operations of time cause generation to be changed into corruption, which again gives rise to new generation. Manifestation is consequently perpetuated by continual alternation between these two processes.

The corporeal body of man is thus subject to generation and corruption, but his real being, which is eternal in essence, abides in the spiritual realms above all temporal processes.

The relation of the Creator to the universe is beautifully expressed in the *Mandukya Upanishad*: "He is the cradle of the universe, for He is the Creator and the Goal of all living things."

58. "He, having composed the Institutes of the Sacred Law, Himself taught them to me in the beginning; afterwards I taught them to Marici and the other sages.

59. "This Bhrigu will fully recite to you these Institutes, for that sage learned the whole of them from me.

60. "Then that great sage Bhrigu, being thus appointed by Manu to promulgate His Laws, pleased in his heart, said to the sages: Listen!

61. "From this Manu, named Svayambhuva, or Sprung from the Self-existent, came six other Manus, all exalted in dignity and of great glory, who have severally produced their own offspring.

62. "They are, Svarocisha, Auttami, Tamasa, Raivata, Kakshusha, beaming with glory, and Vaivasvata, child of the sun.

63. "These seven very glorious Manus, the first of whom is Svayambhuva, produced and protected this world of movable and immovable beings, each during the period allotted to him.

64. "Eighteen Nimeshas or twinklings of the eye make one kashtha; thirty kashthas one kala, thirty kalas one muhurta, and as many muhurtas one day and night.

65. "The sun causes day and night, both human and divine, the night being intended for the repose of created beings and the day for their activities.

66. "A month of mortals is a day and a night of the Pitris, and the division is according to the lunar fortnights. The dark half, beginning with the full moon, is their day for activities, and the bright half, beginning from the new moon, is their night for repose.

67. "A year of mortals is a day and night of the gods and their division is this; the half year during which the sun progresses to the North is the day, that during which it goes southward the night.

68. "Learn now the duration of a day and night of Brahma, and of the several ages of the world in their order.

69. "Sages have given the name of Krita to an age containing four thousand years of the gods; the twilight preceding it consists of as many hundreds, and the twilight following it of the same number.

70. "In the other three ages with their twilights preceding

and following, the thousands and hundreds are diminished successively by one in each.

71. "These twelve thousand years which have been mentioned as the total of the four human ages are called one age of the gods.

72. "But know that the sum of one thousand divine years makes a day of Brahma and that His night has the same length.

73. "Those only who know that the holy day of Brahma indeed endures to the end of a thousand ages of the gods, and that His night endures as long, are really acquainted with the divisions of days and nights."

The Hindu chronology introduced in the above verses which starts from the momentary twinkling of the eye and continues through the cycles of the day, month and year, ends in the period appropriately called "The Holy Day of Brahma"—a period of such great duration is almost bewildering to contemplate.

Periods of a similar vast length are mentioned in other mythologies.

In so far as they deal with sequential stages and continuous changes which imply the past, present, and future, these periods all pertain to time.

Time may be defined as the measure of the motion and duration of manifested natures. Plato defines it in the *Timaeus* as, "An eternal image flowing according to number."

In the first of these definitions time is regarded from the standpoint of the objective world, and in the second in relationship to its cause and paradigm.

Eternity is defined by Plotinus as: "Life which is now infinite, because it is all, and nothing of it is either past or future, since otherwise it would not be all things at once."

Thus all manifested things are subject to the changing conditions of time; but eternal beings, because they are self-sufficient in their essential natures, are not in need of external movement.

Although the world is said to have a beginning in time, this is true only in respect to particular existences: the essential wholes which underlie it have no actual beginning but always are.

"And that this world is without a beginning is reasonable and is also seen from the scriptures." (*Brahma Sutras*.)

If the world began in time, there would have been a time when the Creator did not manifest and consequently when His creative powers were inactive. This implies imperfection, for every perfect being will constantly exercise all its essential powers. Thus since it is the very nature of Brahma to create, He creates eternally and the cosmos perpetually exists.

In the *Upanishads* Brahma is called, "Lord of the past and the future"; "Exalted above the three times," and "The eternity of transient things."

The statement in verse 73 that real knowledge of the lesser divisions of time depends upon a knowledge of the greater periods in which they are comprehended, indicates that that which is primary and invariable is the only true standard of the measures of time. Brahma, abiding in His own eternity, is unindigent of all temporal changes, yet, as the following verse from the *Svetasvatara Upanishad* says, He is the cause of all motion.

"Some seers deluded, speak of nature's self, others of time as cause; whereas it is God's greatness in the world whereby this Brahma-wheel is made to turn."

74. "At the close of His night He, who was asleep, awakes, and awaking draws forth mind which is and is not.

75. "Mind, impelled by Brahma's will to create, performs again the work of creation; and thence emerges the subtle ether, which the wise know to have the quality of sound.

76. "From the transformation of ether springs the pure and potent air, the vehicle of all perfumes; and that is endowed with the quality of touch.

77. "Then from the transformation of air arises the brilliant light, illuminating all and dispelling darkness; and it is declared to possess the quality of form and colour.

78. "And from the modification of light, water is said to be produced having the quality of taste; and from water comes earth with the quality of smell: such is the creation in the beginning.

79. "The before-mentioned age of the gods, or twelve thousand of their years, being multiplied by seventy-one, constitutes what is here named a Manvantara, or the period of the reign of a Manu.

80. "There are numberless Manvantaras, and also creations and destructions of the world: sporting, as it were, Brahma repeats this again and again for the sake of conferring happiness."

This brief recapitulation of the stages of creation deals with the five elements in fuller detail. Each element is invested with the qualities of those which precede it in the sequential order of emergence; the process is one of increasing particularization and subserviency. Ether, the highest element and the substratum of the others, by virtue of its priority, is dominant over the rest.

The purpose of creation is set forth in verse 80 both in relation to the Creator and to the creatures. "Sporting" indicates that Brahma does not create through necessity or compulsion but by the overflowing of His Supernal Life. It also implies an absence of labour, for sport is spontaneous and joyous.

"For the sake of conferring happiness" is expressive of the love of the Creator, Who eternally pours forth to His creatures everything that they need and all that they are able to receive.

Thus, in the words of the *Taittiriya Upanishad*: "From Bliss these creatures are verily born; by Bliss they live, and, departing, into Bliss they return."

(*To be continued*)

TRUTH

Sweep aside thy crafty reasoning, Truth is still our ancient way,
Truth sustains the earth and nations and a monarch's sway,
Mighty Gods and holy sages find in Truth their haven shore,
Scorning death and dark destruction, Truth survives for
evermore!

Deadlier than the serpent's venom is the venom of a lie,
From the false, than from the cobra, men with deeper terror fly,
Dearer than the food to mortals, Truth as nourishment is given,
Truth sustains the wide creation, Truth upholds the highest

Heaven.

—*Ramayana*

PRAYER OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR, KING OF BABYLON

O eternal Prince! Lord of all being!
 As for the king whom Thou lovest, and
 Whose name Thou hast proclaimed
 As was pleasing to Thee,
 Do Thou lead aright his life,
 Guide him in a straight path.
 I am the prince, obedient to Thee,
 The creature of Thy hand;
 Thou hast created me, and
 With dominion over all people
 Thou hast entrusted me.
 According to Thy grace, O Lord,
 Which Thou dost bestow on
 All people,
 Cause me to love Thy supreme dominion,
 And create in my heart
 The worship of Thy Godhead
 And grant what is pleasing to Thee,
 Because Thou hast fashioned my life.

JEWEL

This Brahma; this King of gods; this Lord of the creation; all of these gods; and these five great creations—earth, air, and ether, waters, lights—these; these divers other sources, too, down to the most minute; egg-born, womb-born, sweat-born, by means of germination-born; horses, kine, men, elephants; whatever else which breathes and moves and flies, and what is stationary—all this has Wisdom for its guide; Wisdom's its base. Wisdom is Brahma.

—*Aitareya Upanishad*

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

PROPOSITION LX

Every thing which is the cause of a greater number of effects, is better than that which is allotted a power of producing a less number, and which produces the parts of those things to the wholes of which the other gives subsistence

For if the one is the cause of a less, but the other of a greater number of effects, but the former are parts of the latter, that which gives subsistence to a greater number of effects, will produce all that the other produces; but not vice versa. Hence the latter of these two is more powerful and more comprehensive: for as that which proceeds is to that which proceeds, so is one productive power to another, when assumed with reference to each other. For that which is able to effect a greater number of things, possesses a greater and more total power. But this is nearer to the cause of all things. That, however, which is nearer to this cause, is in a greater degree good, just as the cause of all is *The Good Itself*. Hence, that which is the cause of a greater number of effects, is essentially more excellent than that which produces a less number.

PROPOSITION LXI

Every power which is impartible is greater, but when divided is less

For if it is divided it proceeds into multitude. And if this be the case, it becomes more remote from *The One*. But in consequence of this it is able to effect a less number of things, through departing from *The One*, and the unity which contains it, and will be imperfect, since the good of every thing consists in union.

PROPOSITION LXII

Every multitude which is nearer to The One, is less in quantity than things more remote from It, but is greater in power

For that which is nearer to is more similar to *The One*. But

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 65 to 71.

The One gives subsistence to all things, without having any multitude in Itself. Hence that which is more similar to it, being the cause of a greater number of effects, since *The One* is the cause of all things, has more the form of unity, and is more impartible, because the first cause is *one*. As, therefore, that which is less multiplied, is more allied to *The One*, so likewise, as being allied to the cause of all things, it is productive of a greater number of effects. Hence it is more powerful.

COROLLARY

From these things it is evident that there are more corporeal natures than souls; more souls than intellectual natures; and more intellects than divine unities. And there is the same reasoning in all things.

PROPOSITION LXIII

Every thing which is imparticipable gives subsistence to twofold orders of participated natures, one indeed in things which sometimes participate, but the other in things which always and connascently participate

For that which is always participated, is more similar to the imparticipable than that which is sometimes participated. Hence, before the imparticipable establishes that which is sometimes, it will establish that which is always participable, which, by being participated, differs from that which is posterior to it, but by *the always* is more allied and more similar to the imparticipable. Nor are there alone things which are sometimes participated; for prior to these are the natures which are always participated, through which these also are bound to imparticipables according to a certain well-ordered progression. Nor are there alone things which are always participated: for these possessing an inextinguishable power, since they are always, are prolific of other things which are sometimes participated, and as far as to these the diminution proceeds.

COROLLARY

From hence it is evident that of the unions proceeding from *The One* and which illuminate beings, some are always, but others

sometimes participated. Intellectual participations, likewise, are in a similar manner twofold, as also are the animations of souls, and the participations of other forms. For beauty, similitude, permanency, and sameness, being imparticipable, are participated primarily by natures which always participate, and secondarily by those that sometimes participate according to the same order.

PROPOSITION LXIV

Every monad which ranks as a principle, gives subsistence to a twofold number or series, one indeed of self-perfect hypostases, but the other of illuminations which possess their hypostasis in other things

For if progression is according to diminution through things appropriate to producing causes, perfect natures will proceed from the all-perfect, and, through these as media, imperfect natures will proceed in a well-ordered progression, so that some indeed will be self-perfect hypostases, but others will be imperfect. And these latter will become the forms of participants: for being imperfect, they will be indigent of subjects in their very nature. But the self-perfect hypostases will produce things which participate of themselves: for being perfect, they will indeed fill these from themselves, and establish them in themselves. But they will require nothing of inferior natures to their subsistence. Self-perfect hypostases, therefore, through their separation into multitude, are indeed diminished with respect to their principal monad; but through their self-perfect hyparxis, they are in a certain respect assimilated to it. But imperfect hypostases, in consequence of subsisting in other things, are remote from that which subsists from itself, and through their imperfection are separated from that which perfects all things. Progressions, however, are through similars, so far as to natures which are entirely dissimilar. Every monad, therefore, which ranks as a principle, gives subsistence to a twofold number.

COROLLARY

From these things it is evident that of the unities, some are self-perfect, proceeding from *The One*, but others are illuminations of unions. And with respect to intellects, that some of them are

self-perfect essences, but others belong to animated natures, being only the images of souls. And thus, neither is every union a God, but this is true of a self-perfect unity alone; nor is every intellectual peculiarity an intellect, but an essential peculiarity alone is entitled to this appellation, nor is every illumination of soul a soul, but there are also images of souls.

PROPOSITION LXV

Every thing which has any subsistence whatever, subsists according to cause, so as to have the form of a principle, or according to hyparxis, or according to participation, after the manner of an image

For either that which is produced is seen in that which produces as pre-existing in cause, because every cause antecedently comprehends in itself the thing caused, being that primarily which the thing caused is secondarily. Or that which produces is seen in that which is produced: for the latter participating of the former, exhibits in itself secondarily that which the producing cause is primarily. Or each thing is beheld in its own order, and is neither seen in the cause nor in the effect, for the cause subsists more excellently than that which exists out of the cause and that which is in the effect is less excellent than that which exists out of the cause but is not in any thing else. It is, however, necessary there should be that which after this manner *is*. But everything subsists according to hyparxis in its own order.

(To be continued)

SEED THOUGHT

O Revered of all saints! may Thy feet be ever enshrined in my heart as a light that destroys all darkness, and there be engraved and impressed and fixed.

I seek shelter in that Supreme Lord, by seeing Whom all the universe is clearly seen. Who is pure, blissful, ever-tranquil, and without a beginning and without an end.

—*Amitagati* (a Jain saint)

THE HISTORY OF GREAT LIGHT

BOOK I. ORIGINAL INSTRUCTIONS IN TAO

BY HUAI-NAN-TSZE*

5. THE SERENITY OF THOSE WHO DWELL IN TAO.

The successors of these men were unable to emulate them, although they had light chariots, docile horses, strong whips and pointed goads. Wherefore, the wise and good, the servants of Tao, are ever tranquil and have no desires; they are ever contented, and have no cares. They use the sky as their canopy, the earth as their chariot, the Four Seasons as their horses, and the Yang and Yin as their postillions; riding upon the clouds they soar through the fleecy mists of Heaven, dwelling always with TAO. Perfectly free and knowing no restraints, they advance through the Empyrean; going slowly or rapidly as they wish. They cause the rain-stars to sprinkle moisture on the roads and the wind-stars to sweep the dust; the lightning serves them for a whip, and the thunder for their chariot-wheels. Above, they roam through the vast ocean of ether; below, they pass through the Gate of Boundlessness. There is nothing that does not pass before their vision in these wanderings, yet, on their return, their fullness of spirit remains unchanged;† and although everything within the four corners of the Universe is under their control, they ever revert to their foundation. Wherefore, the sky being their canopy, there is nothing uncovered; the earth being their chariot, there is nothing unsupported; the four seasons being their horses, they are never without such as serve them; the Yang and Yin being their postillions, nothing is unprovided. So that, swiftly as they may move, they are always steady; however far they go, they never tire; their limbs are motionless, and their mental powers remain unimpaired. Yet they know the forms and distinguishing marks of everything within the Universe. How can this be? It is because they have a firm grasp of TAO; thus they are enabled to travel through vast Infinity.

* For previous section see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Vol. XVIII, No. 71.

† Because the enlightened mind is one with TAO, and does not become restless and unsettled in its wanderings.

Therefore although the affairs of the world are not easily administered, they may be directed by a comprehension of the course they naturally take;* although the transmutations of the visible Universe baffle investigation, they may yet be understood by possessing their actual origin and destiny.

6. QUIESCENCE IN TAO

When a mirror and water are brought near to any object, they reflect it as square or round, crooked or straight, as the case may be, because of their perfect tranquillity. In like manner does the heart of a wise man naturally reflect the principles of TAO. Wherefore the wise man does not need to hear sounds or see forms; for he is conscious of both, even in the midst of silence.

The natural quiescence of the nature with which man is born is implanted in him by Heaven; the influences which affect and excite him subsequently, may obscure his real nature. When a man responds to the calls made upon him by natural concerns, that implies an excitation of his mind; and when his faculties are brought into contact with externals, he becomes the subject of desires and aversions. As soon as a man's desires and aversions are roused, his mind is enticed into action by external objects; if he is unable to revert to his true self, the TAO is almost extinguished in him. Wherefore those who are perfectly centred in TAO do not permit any change to take place in their Heaven-implanted constitution through any external agency. Though they undergo variations outwardly in common with everything else, inwardly they never lose their inherent actuality.

Utterly non-existent,† TAO is yet ever ready to respond to those who seek it; it apportions the Zodiacal Mansions as they revolve; for everything, great and small, long and short, due provision is made.

If a man is identified with TAO, although a myriad things present themselves before him, all prancing and rearing, as it were, in utter confusion, they will be powerless to disturb him. Wherefore such men, when in positions of prominence and

* That is in conformity with *Wu-Wei*.

† Since Tao is the cause of all existences, all of which imply limitation, Tao which is absolutely unlimited must be prior to all existence and therefore non-existent.

authority, do not bring their weight heavily to bear upon the people, nor do they injure them. The good betake themselves to them for protection, while the depraved stand in awe of them; for, since they do not oppose the world, therefore the world does not dare to contend with them.

7. IDEAL WAYS AND MEANS

When you go to a river to fish, you cannot fill your bag in one day, however sharp and barbed may be your hook, fine your line and appetizing your bait; even if you add to these advantages the skill of Chan Ho and Kwen Huan,* you will still be unable to compete with those who fish with nets. Nor, if you go out shooting birds, with the best of bows and fleetest of arrows, and have the additional advantage of being as adroit as Yih and Peng Meng,† will you be able to compete with those who net birds on the wing. And why? Because your implements are too small. Thus, if the world be regarded as a cage, and seas and rivers as a net, how can a single bird or fish be lost or escape? So that just as a simple arrow is not equal to one which has a string attached to it to draw it back again, even that is not equal to the net which gathers all within itself.

(To be continued)

MYSTIC VERSE

If thou would'st hear the Nameless, and descend
 Into the Temple-Cave of thine own self,
 There, brooding by the central altar, thou
 May'st haply learn the Nameless hath a voice,
 By which thou wilt abide, if thou be wise.

—Tennyson

* Two famous anglers.

† Two skilful men of ancient days.

HYMN TO ZEUS

O God most glorious, called by many a name,
 Nature's great King, through endless years the same. . . .
 We are Thy children, we alone, of all
 On Earth's broad ways that wander to and fro,
 Bearing Thine image whereso'er we go.
 Wherefore with songs of praise Thy power I will forth shew.
 Lo! yonder Heaven, that round the earth is wheeled,
 Follows Thy guidance, still to Thee doth yield
 Glad homage; Thine unconquerable hand
 Such flaming minister, the levin-brand, and lightning sword,
 Wieldeth, a sword two-edged, whose deathless might
 Pulsates through all that Nature brings to light;
 Vehicle of the Universal Word, that flows
 Through all, and in the light celestial glows
 Of stars both great and small. O Kings of Kings,
 Through ceaseless ages, God, Whose purpose brings to birth,
 whate'er on land or in the sea
 Is wrought, or in high heaven's immensity. . . .
 Chaos to Thee is order; in Thine eyes
 The involved is lovely, Who didst harmonize
 Things evil with Thy good, that there should be
 One Word through all things everlastingly. . . .
 Zeus, the all-beautiful, Whom darkness shrouds,
 Whose lightning lightens in the thunder-clouds;
 For Thou by knowledge art made strong to reign
 O'er all, and all things rulest righteously.
 So by Thee honoured, we will honour Thee,
 Praising Thy works continually with songs,
 As mortals should; nor higher need belongs
 E'en to the Gods, than justly to adore
 The Universal Law for evermore.

—*Cleanthes*

SALLUST ON THE GODS

Chapters VII and XIII*

(*Thomas Taylor's Translation*)

ON THE NATURE AND PERPETUITY OF THE WORLD

It is necessary that the world should be incorruptible and unbegotten: incorruptible, for this being corrupted, it must either produce one better, or one worse, or disordered confusion; but if by corruption it becomes worse, its Artificer must be evil, Who thus changes it from better to worse; but if it becomes better, its Artificer must be defective in power, because He did not fabricate it better at first; but if through corruption He changes it into the same state as before, He labours in vain. And it is not lawful to assert that He changes it into nothing but disorder and confusion: from all which it is sufficiently evident that the world is unbegotten: for if it be incapable of corruption, it is unbegotten; since every thing generated is also corrupted. We may likewise add, that since the world subsists through the goodness of Divinity, it is necessary that Divinity should always be good, and the world perpetually endure: just in the same manner as light is co-existent with the sun and fire, and the shadow with its forming body.

AFTER WHAT MANNER THINGS PERPETUAL ARE
SAID TO BE GENERATED

It now remains that we speak concerning natures which were never generated nor separated from one another; since we have already observed that secondary are produced from primary natures.

Every thing which is generated is either generated by art, or by nature, or according to power. It is necessary, therefore, that every thing operating according to nature or art should be prior to the things produced; but the things operating according to power, should have their productions co-existent with them-

* See also *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 71, p. 302.

selves; since they likewise possess an inseparable power: just as the sun produces light co-existent with itself; fire, heat; and snow, coldness. If, therefore, the Gods produced the world by art, They would not cause it simply to be, but to be in some particular manner: for all art produces form. From whence therefore does the world derive its being? If from nature, since nature in fabricating imparts something of itself to its productions and the Gods are incorporeal, it is necessary that the world (the offspring of the Gods) should be incorporeal. But if any one says that the Gods are corporeal, from whence does the power of incorporeals originate? And besides, if this be admitted, the world being corrupted, its Artificer also must necessarily be corrupted, on the hypothesis that He operates according to nature. It remains therefore that the Gods produced the world by power alone; but every thing generated by power, subsists together with the cause containing the power: and hence productions of this kind cannot be destroyed unless the producing cause is deprived of power. So that those who subject the world to corruption, plainly deny that there are Gods; or if they assert that there are Gods, they deprive Divinity of power. He therefore Who produced all things through power, caused all things to be co-existent with Himself. And since this power is the greatest possible, not only men and animals were produced, but also Gods and daemons (angels). And as much as the First God differs from our nature, by so much is it necessary that there should be more powers situated between us and Him; for all natures which are much distant from each other possess a multitude of connecting mediums.

The list of books is long; mishaps arise
 To bar the student's progress; life is brief;
 Whatever, then, in books is best and chief,
 The essence, kernel—that attracts the wise.

VRIDDHA CHANAKYA.